

Members

Rep. Robert Bischoff, Chairperson
Rep. Markt Lytle
Rep. Richard Mangus
Rep. Phyllis Pond
Sen. Kent Adams
Sen. Thomas Weatherwax
Sen. James Lewis
Sen. Richard Young



NATURAL RESOURCES STUDY COMMITTEE

Legislative Services Agency
200 West Washington Street, Suite 301
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2789
Tel: (317) 233-0696 Fax: (317) 232-2554

LSA Staff:

Bernadette Bartlett, Fiscal Analyst for the
Committee
Steve Wenning, Attorney for the Committee

Authority: IC 2-5-5-1

MEETING MINUTES¹

Meeting Date: July 16, 2003
Meeting Time: 10:00 A.M.
Meeting Place: State House, 200 W. Washington St.,
Room 156-A
Meeting City: Indianapolis, Indiana
Meeting Number: 1

Members Present: Rep. Robert Bischoff, Chairperson; Rep. Markt Lytle; Rep. Richard Mangus; Rep. Phyllis Pond; Sen. Kent Adams; Sen. Thomas Weatherwax; Sen. James Lewis; Sen. Richard Young.

Members Absent: None.

I) Call to Order

Representative Robert Bischoff, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:08 AM. He presented opening remarks and a recent history of the Natural Resources Committee. After an introduction of the Committee members, testimony was received. The Chair recognized the following individuals to testify.

II) Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Status Report

Dan Mathis, Legislative Relations, DNR

Mr. Mathis commended the Committee for their hard work during the past legislative session and presented a power point presentation highlighting passed legislation: HEA 1552-(Increases user fees where respective user groups voiced support) and HEA 1336-(Lake and River Enhancement). He distributed hard copies of the power point presentation to the Committee members (Exhibit A).

¹ Exhibits and other materials referenced in these minutes can be inspected and copied in the Legislative Information Center in Room 230 of the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Requests for copies may be mailed to the Legislative Information Center, Legislative Services Agency, 200 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2789. A fee of \$0.15 per page and mailing costs will be charged for copies. These minutes are also available on the Internet at the General Assembly homepage. The URL address of the General Assembly homepage is <http://www.ai.org/legislative/>. No fee is charged for viewing, downloading, or printing minutes from the Internet.

John Goss, Director, DNR

Mr. Goss testified on the overall accomplishments and challenges to the DNR over the last year. Mr. Goss commented that all campgrounds remain open despite budget problems and with significantly fewer summer staff members. Mr. Goss also listed DNR accomplishments (see Exhibit A) and noted the Budget Committee released capital funds from the past biennia totaling \$19.3 million.

Mr. Mathis passed out a proposal establishing a one dollar fee per student visiting state parks in school groups (Exhibit B). He stated the DNR estimates the fee could generate \$300,000 per year, including a waiver of the fee for children eligible for free school lunch.

Mr. Goss fielded questions from the Committee members.

Representative Phyllis Pond asked how much damage was caused by the Wabash flooding.

Mr. Goss responded that the damage will entail a lot of clean-up throughout the rest of the summer. He stated it will be tough to stay within budget if there is need to rewire campgrounds and repair major buildings that have been underwater. Chairman Bischoff and Senator Thomas Weatherwax advised Mr. Goss to inquire about the use of federal funds to alleviate the cost of the flood damage.

Mr. Goss then asked for consent of the Committee to hear short presentations by DNR members illustrating issues which the DNR feels should be studied by the Committee.

Tom Hohman, Engineer, DNR

Mr. Hohman, testified on in-house construction. (See Exhibit A.)

Mr. Hohman distributed and testified on a handout illustrating the projects bid by the DNR in 2001-2002 (Exhibit C).

Mike Nickolaus, Director of Oil and Gas Division, DNR

Mr. Nickolaus asked the Committee on behalf of the DNR to study a rule change regarding abandoned wells. He stated establishing criminal penalties for false reporting on oil and gas wells would help the DNR ensure the compliance of properly plugging wells. (See Exhibit A.)

Chairman Bischoff asked if it would be feasible to tour an area where this is an issue.

Mr. Goss stated a tour could be arranged to allow the Committee members to view correct and incorrectly plugged wells.

John Goss, Director, DNR

Mr. Goss followed Mr. Nickolaus' presentation and stated that Indiana is not receiving its full potential share of federal money due to free senior licenses. He said some of Indiana's share of federal money is going to border states. He recommended the establishment of a senior license which was endorsed by the Committee two years ago, expanding the current youth license, and leveraging federal funds.

Mr. Greg McCollum, DNR

Mr. McCollum distributed a handout of estimated revenue for establishing senior fishing license fees (Exhibit D). He commented that Indiana is losing \$800,000 a year and that a minimal increase would add to revenue and the state would receive more federal money.

The Chairman asked if they could charge \$1 for a senior license and receive federal money.

Mr. McCollum responded that DNR would have to charge at least \$2.75 to receive federal money.

Representative Pond asked that in accordance to the federal government change in retirement age from 65 to 66-67 if the DNR could increase the senior license age to 66 or 67.

Representative Bischoff thanked Representative Pond's creativity, and stated that her idea could be discussed at a later meeting.

Representative Bischoff also provided a brief legislative history of the issue. He stated that many of his senior constituents have commented to him how important it was to have the senior license without charge.

Paul Garrett, DNR

Mr. Garrett, DNR, testified on a drainage proposal called Drainage Lite involving local officials (see Exhibit A).

Matt Brooks, Executive Director, Association of Indiana Counties

Mr. Brooks, testified on the current dialogue with local surveyors and indicated the need to follow the lead of the Association of Surveyors.

Senator Weatherwax suggested that Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) be included in further discussions on this subject matter.

Representative Pond suggested that farmers should also be included in this discussion.

III) Topics assigned by the Legislative Council

Additionally, Director Goss mentioned the topics of the Heritage Agency proposal, and the Lincoln Bicentennial. He stated the DNR would give a report on the Heritage Agency proposal at the next meeting of the Committee. He also offered the DNR to staff the Lincoln Bicentennial Commission.

Marilyn Cage, Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV)

Ms. Cage indicated that this past session the General Assembly passed HCR 10. Ms. Cage distributed copies of the HCR (Exhibit E). HCR 10 urges the BMV to issue a Lincoln theme license plate from 2008 through 2012. She stated the opportunity to design the plate was offered to the Committee, and the design adoption time frame allows for discussion and that the design would not require completion until 2006.

The Chairman indicated that it is an honor for the Committee to offer designs for the license plates. He would like to discuss the design each meeting and urged Committee members to be creative and bring ideas to each meeting.

Representative Lytle provided an additional Indiana connection to Lincoln, other than his living in Indiana during part of his childhood. He noted an Indiana delegate to the 1859 Republican National Convention along with the Pennsylvania delegate cast the deciding votes to nominate Lincoln as the Republican Presidential candidate in 1860.

Reed Williamson, President of Historic Landmarks Association of Indiana

Mr. Williamson testified that the Committee was directed by the Legislative Council to study the consolidation of Indiana historical entities. Mr. Reed indicated he would like to see consolidation accomplished in the next legislative session. He stated that since the historical entities are scattered in seven different locations, it would be more efficient to operate under one agency. He opined that would also provide opportunity to upgrade the treatment of Indiana's historical landmarks.

Representative Lytle indicated this issue has had legislation introduced in prior General Assemblies.

IV) Topics of Interest to the Committee

Senator Richard Young said he would like the Committee to discuss field trials for dogs, as sporting dog groups are having difficulty finding suitable alternative sights. He also suggested studying the Classified Forest Act. He specifically would like to look at the requirement to use a licensed surveyor in the determination of the number of acres necessary for forest qualification. He suggested the Committee should explore determination of acreage through the Soil and Water Conservation office by aerial photography.

Representative Bischoff asked for the Legislative Services Agency (LSA) staff to put Senator Young's items on a future meeting agenda.

Senator Kent Adams said it would be prudent for groups such as the Indiana Beagler's Alliance to come and provide the background information on field trials for dogs.

Senator Weatherwax mentioned the Water Shortage Task Force, which he chairs, and the duality of this issue with NRSC.

V) Public Testimony

Dick Mercier, Indiana Sportsman's Roundtable

Mr. Mercier asked the Committee to explore the possibility of restoring lost habitat from farming, urban sprawl, and highways by not mowing highway right of ways and around rest areas. He said he did not want to see any restoration endangering driver safety.

Chairman Bischoff indicated this item would be on a future agenda of the Committee.

Bob Ettleman, Marion County Water Conservation District

Mr Ettleman thanked the legislators for a successful session. He asked the Committee to look into providing long term stable funding for the Clean Water Indiana Fund, with the possibility of establishment of a dedicated fund for technical assistance.

Representative Bischoff noted this issue merited discussion during a future meeting and indicated that it would be placed on a future agenda.

Jack Hyden, Indiana Beagler's Alliance

Mr Hyden spoke on behalf of sporting dog groups and their opposition to the DNR closing off dog training in state parks. He presented an email and handouts with data on the impact of hunting in the spring and summer and that dog training does not present any detrimental effect on wildlife.

Representative Bischoff indicated this issue will put be on a future agenda of the Committee.

VI) Committee Discussion

Senator Weatherwax commented that during the last session in the Senate Finance Committee the members could not find where money would be saved by consolidating historical entities. He recommended to Mr. Goss that documentation of savings should be presented.

Mr. Goss responded to Senator Weatherwax that the Department of State Personnel and the State Budget Agency are looking into this issue.

With no one wishing to offer additional testimony, the Chair moved on to the selection of future meeting dates for the Committee in 2003.

The meeting dates selected are:

- August 14-15 at Clifty Falls State Park
- September 9-10 at Pokagon State Park
- October 14-15 at Spring Mill State Park

Representative Bischoff noted that if there are sufficient funds, the Committee will meet a fifth time in Indianapolis to take votes on the issues brought before the Committee. He instructed the LSA to contact all members regarding future meetings.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:05 P.M.